

# 7 Days of prayer & fasting

**11 - 17 Jan 2016**



## 7 DAYS OF FASTING: 11-17 JANUARY 2016

### WHY A 7-Day FAST?

- Seven is a number of completion, divine perfection or something that is completed. *“And on the seventh day God **ended** His work which He had done; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.”* (Genesis 2:2; AMP)
- No animal could be sacrificed until it was seven days old. *“Likewise shall you do with your oxen and your sheep. Seven days the firstborn shall be with its mother;”* (Exodus 22:30a)
- The Lord would discipline Israel up to sevenfold if they refused to obey Him. *“And if in spite of all this you still will not listen and be obedient to Me, then I will chastise and discipline you seven times more for your sins.”* (Leviticus 26:18)
- Jesus mentions seven parables in Matthew 13.
  - The parable of the sower.
  - About the kingdom of heaven likened to a man who sowed good seed.
  - The kingdom of heaven likened to a mustard seed which a man took and sowed in a field.
  - The kingdom of heaven likened unto leaven which a woman took and hid in three “measures of meal”.
  - The parable of the tares.
  - The kingdom of heaven likened unto treasure hid in a field.
  - The kingdom of heaven likened unto a merchant seeking goodly pearls.
- There were *seven* letters to the seven churches in the Book of Revelation (2,3).
- There were seven trumpets announcing judgments by God in Revelations 8.
- There were seven pairs of clean animals received into the Ark. (Genesis 7:2)
- Joshua and Israel marched around Jericho seven times while seven priests blew seven trumpets before the wall came crushing down. *“You shall march around the enclosure, all the men of war going around the city once. This you shall do for six days. And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams’ horns; and on the seventh day you shall march around the enclosure seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets.”* (Joshua 6:3-4)

- Naaman was told to bathe in the Jordan seven times and he would be healed of leprosy.
- *“Elisha sent a message to him, saying, Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be clean.”* (2 Kings 5:10)
- There were seven qualities/attributes of the Messiah mentioned in Isaiah 11:2. *“And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him – the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the reverential and obedient fear of the Lord.”*

## 1. THE PRACTICAL STEPS TO FASTING

**DEFINITION OF FASTING:** Fasting is abstaining from food for spiritual purposes. (Although there are biblical accounts of people fasting from food and water, we will consider abstaining from food only).

- Fasting is a sacrifice.
- You pay a price by giving up life’s necessities.
- You afflict your soul, yielding to God, to the point where you would pray with all of your heart.
- Fasting doesn’t always work our way. *“Why have we fasted, ‘they say’ and you have not seen? Why have we afflicted our souls, and you take no notice?”* (Isaiah 58:3)
- Fasting is a way of humbling yourself. (Psalm 35:13) *“But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth; I afflicted myself with fasting, and I prayed with head bowed on my breast.”*

**HOW SHOULD I PREPARE FOR A FAST?** With an attitude of positive faith, believing that:- "It is God's will for me to fast and God will bless me when I do fast in accordance with his will." The basis for believing that it is God's will for me to fast and the method of fasting according to His will is found in:- (Mt 6:17-18).

**WHO SHOULD EXERCISE CAUTION WHEN FASTING?** If you have certain types of physical problems, e.g. diabetes, or if you are on some kind of regular medication, you should consult your doctor and get his advice before you begin to fast. There will be some people who will not be able to practice fasting. It is the responsibility of other Christians to fast for those who cannot.

**WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF FASTING?** Before fasting choose your objectives in fasting. Here are some Biblical objectives:-

**First:-** To humble yourself before God. David said "I humbled my soul with fasting." If you fast with the right motive, and in faith, you can humble yourself, and when you do this God will lift you up.

**Second:-** Another motive is to come closer to God. James 4:8 says:- "Come near to God and He will come near to you."

**Third:-** When you fast God will give you greater and deeper understanding of His word.

**Fourth:-** To find God's will and to receive direction in your life.

**Fifth:-** To seek healing or deliverance from evil spirits. Jesus said about one kind of evil spirit:- "This kind can come out only come out by prayer and fasting." (Mk 9:29) Before Jesus Himself entered on His ministry of healing and deliverance, He fasted and prayed for forty days.

**Sixth:-** When we need God's intervention in some particular crisis, or when some tremendous problem has arisen, which we can't handle by ordinary means.

**Seventh:-** To intercede and pray on behalf of others. e.g. An unsaved relative. Are you willing to do something that will cost you on behalf of your loved one?

## **2. THE 7 SEVEN BASIC STEPS TO FASTING TO MAKE YOUR TIME WITH THE LORD MORE MEANINGFUL & SPIRITUALLY REWARDING**

### **STEP 1: Set Your Objective**

***Why are you fasting?*** Is it for spiritual renewal, for guidance, for healing, for the resolution of problems, for special grace to handle a difficult situation? Ask the Holy Spirit to clarify His leading and objectives for your prayer fast. This will enable you to pray more specifically and strategically.

*Through fasting and prayer we humble ourselves before God so the Holy Spirit will stir our souls, awaken our churches, and heal our land according to 2 Chronicles 7:14. Make this a priority in your fasting.*

### **Why do we fast?**

- King David wrote that he "*humbled himself with fasting*" (Psalm 35:13). Fasting is a means of getting our minds back on the reality that we are not self-sufficient. Fasting helps us realise just how fragile we are and how much we depend on things beyond ourselves.

- The Bible gives examples of God's people occasionally combining fasting with their prayers so as to stir up their zeal and renew their dedication and commitment to Him.

## Examples of fasts

- 3 Day fast (Acts 9:9) (Esther 4:16)
- 7 Day fast (1 Samuel 31:13)
- 10 Day fast (Nehemiah 1:4)
- 21 Day fast (Daniel 10:3)
- 40 Day fast (Exodus 24:18), (Matthew 4:1-11), (Mark 2:18-20)
- Media fast - no Internet/TV and/or radio, video games etc.
- Pleasant food fast - no meats and no sweets.
- Meal fast - skip certain meals each week.
- Other - as the Lord directs you

## Great men of faith

- Jesus (Matthew 4:2; Mark 2:18-20) fasted so His Disciples might draw closer to God. He knew that His true disciples, once He was no longer there in the flesh with them, at times would need to fast to regain and renew their zeal to serve Him (Mark 2:18-20).
- Moses (Exodus 34:28)
- Elijah (1 Kings 19:8)
- Daniel (Daniel 9:3; 10:2-3)
- Paul (2 Corinthians 11:27)
- James (James 4:8) tells us, "*Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.*"

## STEP 2: Make Your Commitment

Pray about the kind of fast you should undertake. ***Jesus implied that all of His followers should fast (Matthew 6:16-18; 9:14,15)*** For Him it was a matter of when believers would fast, not if they would do it. Before you fast, decide the following up front:

- **How long you will fast** - one meal, one day, a week, several weeks, forty days (Beginners should start slowly, building up to longer fasts.)
- **The type of fast God wants you to undertake** (such as water only, or water and juices; what kinds of juices you drink and how often)
- What physical or social activities you will restrict.
- How much time each day you will devote to prayer and God's Word.
- Making these commitments ahead of time will help you sustain your fast when physical temptations and life's pressures tempt you to abandon it.

### STEP 3: Prepare Yourself Spiritually

The very foundation of fasting and prayer is repentance. Unconfessed sin will hinder your prayers. Here are several things you can do to prepare your heart:

- Ask God to help you make a comprehensive list of your sins.
- **Confess every sin that the Holy Spirit calls to your remembrance** and accept God's forgiveness (1 John 1:9).
- Seek forgiveness from all whom you have offended, and forgive all who have hurt you (Mark 11:25; Luke 11:4; 17:3,4).
- Make restitution as the Holy Spirit leads you.
- **Ask God to fill you with His Holy Spirit** according to His command in Ephesians 5:18 and His promise in 1 John 5:14,15.
- Surrender your life fully to Jesus Christ as your Lord and Master; refuse to obey your worldly nature (Romans 12:1,2).
- Meditate on the attributes of God, His love, sovereignty, power, wisdom, faithfulness, grace, compassion, and others (Psalm 48:9,10; 103:1-8, 11-13).
- **Begin your time of fasting and prayer with an expectant heart** (Hebrews 11:6).
- Do not underestimate spiritual opposition. Satan sometimes intensifies the natural battle between body and spirit (Galatians 5:16,17).

### STEP 4: Prepare Yourself Physically

Fasting requires reasonable precautions. Consult your physician first, especially if you take prescription medication or have a chronic ailment. Some persons should never fast without professional supervision.

Physical preparation makes the drastic change in your eating routine a little easier so that you can turn your full attention to the Lord in prayer.

- **Do not rush into your fast.**

- Prepare your body. Eat smaller meals before starting a fast. Avoid high-fat and sugary foods.
- **Eat raw fruit and vegetables for two days before starting a fast.**

## STEP 5: Put Yourself on a Schedule

For maximum spiritual benefit, set aside ample time to be alone with the Lord. Listen for His leading. The more time you spend with Him, the more meaningful your fast will be.

### *Morning*

- Begin your day in praise and worship.
- Read and meditate on God's Word, preferably on your knees.
- Invite the Holy Spirit to work in you to will and to do His good pleasure according to Philippians 2:13.
- Invite God to use you. Ask Him to show you how to influence your world, your family, your church, your community, your country, and beyond.
- Pray for His vision for your life and empowerment to do His will.

### *Noon*

- Return to prayer and God's Word.
- Take a short prayer walk.
- Spend time in intercessory prayer for your community's and nation's leaders, for the world's unreached millions, for your family or special needs.

### *Evening*

- Get alone for an unhurried time of "seeking His face."
- If others are fasting with you, meet together for prayer.
- Avoid television or any other distraction that may dampen your spiritual focus.

When possible, begin and end each day on your knees with your spouse for a brief time of praise and thanksgiving to God. Longer periods of time with our Lord in prayer and study of His Word are often better spent alone.

Here is a daily schedule and list of juices you may find useful and satisfying. Modify this schedule and the drinks you take to suit your circumstances and tastes.

### *5 a.m. - 8 a.m.*

- Fruit juices, preferably freshly squeezed or blended and diluted in 50 percent distilled water if the fruit is acid. Apple, pear, grapefruit, papaya, watermelon, or other fruit juices are generally preferred. If you cannot do your own juicing, buy juices without sugar or additives.

**10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m.**

- Fresh vegetable juice made from lettuce, celery, and carrots in three equal parts.

**2:30 p.m. - 4 p.m.**

- Herb tea with a drop of honey. Avoid black tea or any tea with caffeine.

**6 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.**

- Broth made from boiling potatoes, celery, and carrots with no salt. After boiling about half an hour, pour the water into a container and drink it.

## **Tips on Juice Fasting**

- Drinking fruit juice will decrease your hunger pains and give you some natural sugar energy. The taste and lift will motivate and strengthen you to continue.
- The best juices are made from fresh watermelon, lemons, grapes, apples, cabbage, beets, carrots, celery, or leafy green vegetables. In cold weather, you may enjoy a warm vegetable broth.
- Mix acidic juices (orange and tomato) with water for your stomach's sake.
- Avoid caffeinated drinks. And avoid chewing gum or mints, even if your breath is bad. They stimulate digestive action in your stomach.
- When your designated time for fasting is finished, you will begin to eat again. But how you break your fast is extremely important for your physical and spiritual well-being.

## **STEP 6: End Your Fast Gradually**

Begin eating gradually. Do not eat solid foods immediately after your fast. Suddenly reintroducing solid food to your stomach and digestive tract will likely have negative, even dangerous, consequences. Try several smaller meals or snacks each day. If you end your fast gradually, the beneficial physical and spiritual effects will result in continued good health.

***Here are some suggestions to help you end your fast properly:***

- Break an extended water fast with fruit such as watermelon.
- While continuing to drink fruit or vegetable juices, add the following:  
**First day:** Add a raw salad.  
**Second day:** Add baked or boiled potato, no butter or seasoning.

**Third day:** Add a steamed vegetable.

**Thereafter:** Begin to reintroduce your normal diet.

- Gradually return to regular eating with several small snacks during the first few days. Start with a little soup and fresh fruit such as watermelon and cantaloupe. Advance to a few tablespoons of solid foods such as raw fruits and vegetables or a raw salad and baked potato.

## STEP 7: Expect Results

If you sincerely humble yourself before the Lord, repent, pray, and seek God's face; if you consistently meditate on His Word, you will experience a heightened awareness of His presence (John 14:21). The Lord will give you fresh, new spiritual insights. Your confidence and faith in God will be strengthened. You will feel mentally, spiritually, and physically refreshed. You will see answers to your prayers.

Just as we need fresh infillings of the Holy Spirit daily, we also need new times of fasting before God. A 24-hour fast each week has been greatly rewarding for many Christians.

If you fail to make it through your first fast, do not be discouraged. You may have tried to fast too long the first time out, or you may need to strengthen your understanding and resolve.

I encourage you to join me in fasting and prayer again and again until we truly experience revival in our homes, our churches, our beloved nation, and throughout the world.

## Items to pray over while fasting

### PERSONAL LIFE:

- For freedom from habits, addictions and negative lifestyles
- For clear vision and direction from the Lord
- For renewing and strengthening of relationship with the Lord

### FAMILY LIFE:

- Renewal of covenant and unity in the home
- Household salvation(s)
- The will and purposes of God over each member of your family
- Peace, prosperity, health and protection

**CHURCH LIFE:**

- Unity and strengthening of relationships
- Direction and Vision for the new year
- Specific needs: The pastoral staff and leadership, Ministry and financial resources, a building.
- Life Groups, Outreach, Missions, Church Planting

**OUR NATION:**

- Pray for the leaders of our nation
- Pray for revival over our nation (see Psalm 72:8)
- Pray that we would be a blessing to the nations (see Rev. 22:2)

## **Significant prayers in the Bible**

### **The Old Testament**

Abraham's Intercession for Sodom & Gomorrah - Genesis 18:23-33

Daniel's Prayer - Daniel 9:4-19

David's Prayer for Protection - Psalm 3

David's Prayer for Favor - Psalm 4

David's Prayer for God's Help - Psalm 13

David's Prayer - Psalm 23

David's Prayer & Fasting - Psalm 35

David's Prayer for Forgiveness - Psalm 51

Elijah's Prayer for the Widow's Son - 1 Kings 17:20-22

Esther and the Nation of Israel Prayer & Fasting - Esther 4 & 5

Hannah's Prayer for a Child - 1 Samuel 1:10-12

Hannah's Prayer of Thanksgiving - 1 Samuel 2:1-10

Moses Intercession for His People - Exodus 32:11-13 32:31-32

Moses & Promise Land - Deuteronomy 3:24-29

Moses' 40 Day Prayer Deuteronomy 9:18-20; 9:25-29

## **The New Testament**

Jesus Temptation & Fasting - Matthew 4:1

Jesus Praying in the Wilderness - Matthew 6:6

The Lord's Prayer - Matthew 6:9-13 & Luke 11:2-4

Jesus to the Father - John 12:27-28

Jesus Prayer of Thanksgiving - Matthew 11:25-26

Jesus Prayer for Lazarus - John 11:41-42

Jesus in Gethsemane - Matthew 26:39 & 42

Jesus at the Cross - Luke 23:34, 46 & Matthew 27:46

Apostles For Divine Direction Acts 1:24,25

Apostles and Believer's Prayer Acts 4:24-31

## **Quotes on Fasting**

"It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" – *Jesus Christ*

"A diet may change the way you look, but a fast will change the way you live. A diet may change your appearance, but a fast will change the way you see." - *Lisa Bevere*

"Fasting is abstaining from anything that hinders prayer." - *Andrew Bonar*

"Our greatest victories are won on our knees and with empty stomachs." - *Julio C. Ruibal*

“Fasting helps express, deepens, confirms the resolution that we are ready to sacrifice anything, even ourselves, to attain what we seek for the kingdom of God.” - *Andrew Murray*

“Fasting, if we conceive of it truly, must not be confined to the question of food and drink; fasting should really be made to include abstinence from anything which is legitimate in and of itself for the sake of some special spiritual purpose.” - *Martyn Lloyd-Jones*

“Bear up the hands that hang down, by faith and prayer; support the tottering knees. Have you any days of fasting and prayer? Storm the throne of grace and persevere therein, and mercy will come down.” - *John Wesley*

“Fasting confirms our utter dependence upon God by finding in Him a source of sustenance beyond food.” - *Dallas Willard*

“Fasting is important, more important perhaps, than many of us have supposed, when exercised with a pure heart and a right motive, fasting may provide us with a key to unlock doors where other keys have failed.” - *Arthur Wallis*

“The purpose of fasting is to loosen to some degree the ties which bind us to the world of material things and our surroundings as a whole, in order that we may concentrate all our spiritual powers upon the unseen and eternal things.” - *Ole Kristian O. Hallesby*

“You desire a closer walk with God. It's important to understand the role that fasting can play in your Christian life. It empowers your spirit man, enhances your prayer life, and helps you focus on your Christian walk.” - *Marilyn Salmonson*

“Every request needs humility of spirit. Fast then and you will receive from the Lord what you ask.” - *Hermes "The Shepherd"*

## Scriptures on fasting

Exodus 34:28	“So he (Moses) was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he did not eat bread or drink water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.”	Individual
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1 Samuel 31:13	<i>“They took their bones and buried them under the tamarisk tree at Jabesh, and fasted seven days.”</i>	Corporate
Nehemiah 1:4	<i>“When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven.”</i>	Individual
Esther 4:16	<i>“Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish.”</i>	Corporate
Daniel 6:18	<i>“Then the king returned to his palace and spent the night without eating and without any entertainment being brought to him. And he could not sleep.”</i>	Individual
Daniel 10:3	<i>“I ate no choice food; no meat or wine touched my lips.”</i>	Individual

## **Scriptures from the Old Testament**

- Moses fasted 40 days on behalf of Israel’s sin: Deuteronomy 9:9, 18, 25-29
- David fasted and mourned the death of Saul: 2 Samuel 1:12.
- David fasted and mourned the death of Abner: 2 Samuel 3:35.
- David fasted and mourned the death of his child: 2 Samuel 12:16.
- Elijah fasted 40 days after fleeing from Jezebel: 1 Kings 19:7-18.
- Darius fasted in concern for Daniel: Daniel 6:18-24.

- Daniel fasted on behalf of Judah's sin while reading Jeremiah's prophecy: Daniel 9:1-19.
- Daniel fasted regarding a mysterious vision from God: Daniel 10:3-13.
- Esther fasted on behalf of her people: Esther 4:13-16.
- Nehemiah fasted and mourned over the broken walls of Jerusalem: Nehemiah 1:4-2:10.
- The people of Nineveh fasted after hearing the message of Jonah: Jonah 3.

## **Scriptures from the New Testament**

- Anna fasted for the redemption of Jerusalem through the coming Messiah: Luke 2:37.
- Jesus fasted 40 days before his temptation and the beginning of his ministry: Matthew 4:1-11.
- The elders in Antioch fasted before sending off Paul and Barnabas: Acts 13:1-5.
- Cornelius fasted and sought God's plan of salvation: Acts 10:30.
- Paul fasted three day fast after his Damascus Road encounter: Acts 9:9.
- Paul fasted 14 days while at sea on a sinking ship: Acts 27:33-34.

### **Note:**

Remember that it is the attitude of a heart sincerely seeking Him to which God responds with a blessing (Jeremiah 14:12, 1 Corinthians 8:8). May God greatly bless you as you fast.

**“Reach for the top, the bottom is overcrowded!” – Jerome Liberty**

## **Medical Disclaimer:**

We encourage those with health problems to always consult your physician prior to beginning any type of fast. If you have concerns about your physical ability to fast, we especially urge you to consult a physician before beginning your fast.

You should never delay seeking medical advice, disregard medical advice, or discontinue medical treatment because of information in this booklet.

Professional assistance: You must not rely on the information in this booklet as an alternative to medical advice from your doctor or other professional healthcare provider. If you have any specific questions about any medical matter you should consult your doctor or other professional healthcare provider.